

Jessica Chung
26 Avondale Rd
West Hartford, CT 06117

February 17, 2022

RE: Department of Education's Legislative Agenda

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Representative Exum, Senator Slap and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Jessica Chung and I live in West Hartford. I have two daughters, a preschooler and a second grader who attend the University of Hartford Magnet School, which is a CREC Magnet School. I am asking you to please support an increase in the RESC state magnet grant.

My daughters benefit greatly through the extraordinary opportunity **they** experience every day at **UHMS**.

Our daughters have received an exceptional education over some of the absolute toughest years that public schools have ever faced. From pre-K3 through second grade, my older daughter has been challenged, loved and supported by her teachers in all kinds of ways, and my younger daughter it's already enjoying so many of the same advantages. The commitment of every single adult at our children's school, from the nurse to the administration to the classroom teachers has made them feel safe and celebrated even as they have learned so many valuable lessons in an outside of their classrooms.

When my older daughter struggled with reading in the first grade, her difficulties were quickly identified and addressed with a number of different interventions, caringly communicated to us as parents and successfully bolstering her reading abilities in confidence, where she now reads above grade level in the second grade. When my younger daughter struggled to reacclimate to a school environment with everything from sharing Play-Doh to potty training, her preschool teacher helped her with love and patience at each step. I am constantly amazed by the fact that every adult we went across in the school building knows my daughters names, and feels equally responsible for their academic and personal success, whether or not they have ever been my children's classroom teacher. Add to that the many demonstrated advantages of a racially and economically diverse community, and I truly believe my children are as lucky as they come to be CREC students.

Our magnet schools are at risk. Without sustainable funding, CREC which operates 16 innovative schools, will be forced to either cut programming or to increase the tuition costs they charge to local school districts.

I am asking the legislature to follow through on its promise to invest in the future of *all* students. Magnet schools have a successful track record of providing their students a chance to thrive. Currently the Sheff Stipulated Agreement requires the expansion of schools and

program, before you add any more schools, please adequately fund those that you have established and that are thriving. I urge you to continue funding the schools that are already operating and available and have demonstrated success before you consider funding new school choice options.

SAMPLE